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ABSTRACT

This resource, which includes nine colored postcards, offers words and pictures to stimulate classroom discussion of the key issues relating to both the institutions of art and of education. It attempts to challenge and question the current relations of power, hierarchies, and received information in the field of art education. Part 1, "On Teaching Impressionism," takes of reference in the art curriculum. Part 2, "This Is the National Curriculum for Art," examines issues related to contemporary art practice and its placing in the range of contexts that include the gallery, the school, and the National Curriculum for Art. Part 3, "On Art and/or Education," questions the purposes to which artistic production is made. Part 4, "This is Not," takes the tactical role of negation to resist a sense of preferred meaning, leading to part 5, "Questioning Children: What is a Question?," which examines the method of inquiry underpinning the entire project. (MM)

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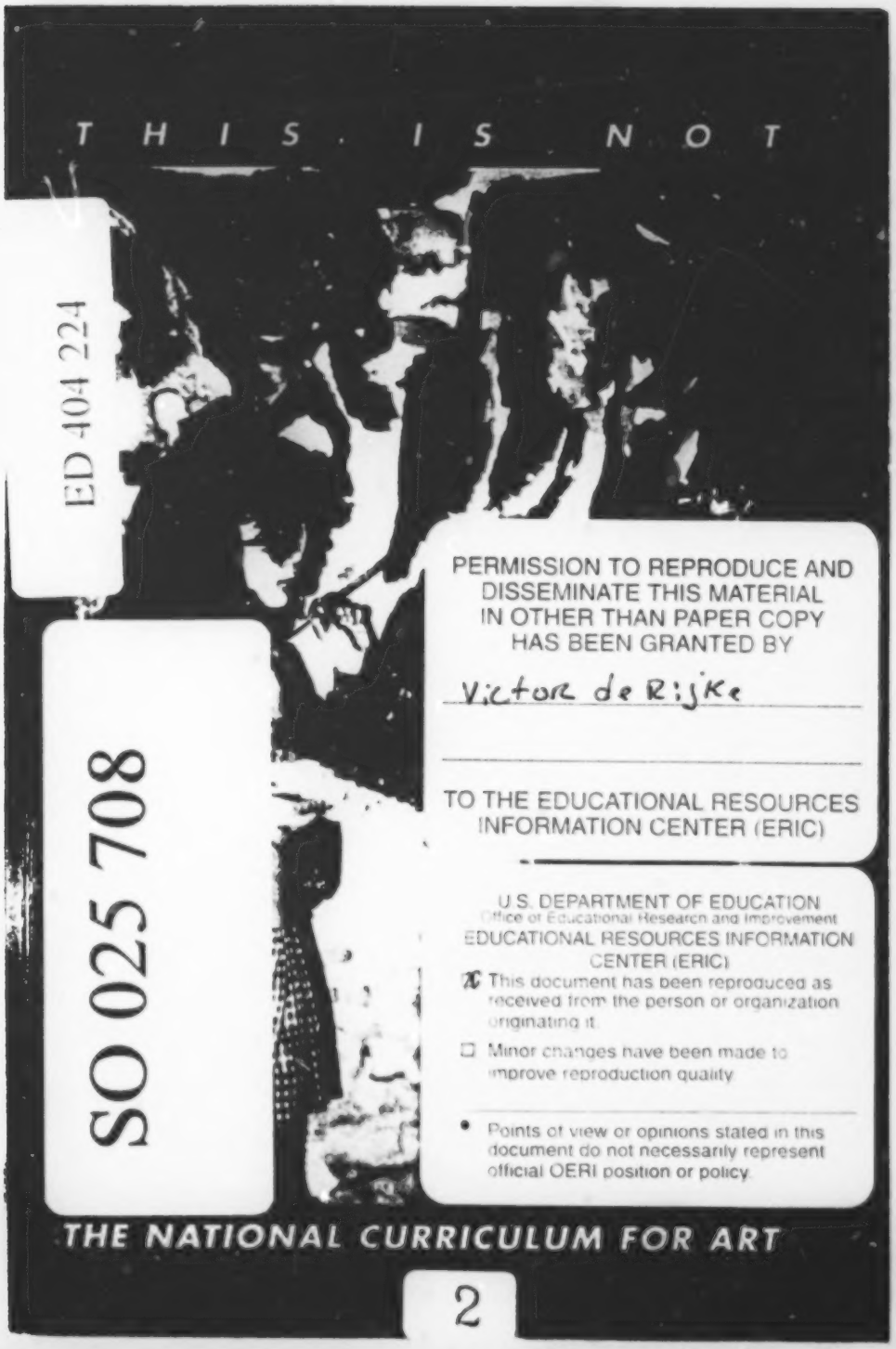

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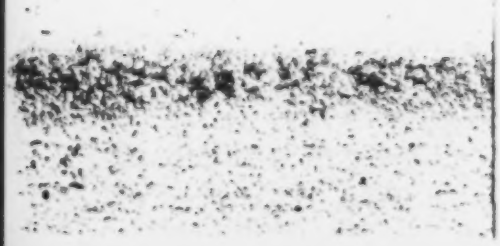

THIS IS NOT THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM FOR ART

a collaborative project with children on the discourses of art and education

Vick de Rijke & Geoff Cox

CREDITS:

© Contributing Artists & Critics

Fionnuala, David, Salam, Tom, Andrew M, Jack, Shaphain, Poria, Mary, Tom G, Jessica, Craig, Richard, Rory, Mandy, Isolde, Hugo, Thomas, Lisa, Peter, Jodie, Ben, Andy Z, Roisin, Rebecca, Sefakor, Daniel, Eliot, Khali, Louis, Davrod, Geoff, Vick, Paula.

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INTRODUCTION: THIS IS NOT A TEACHING PACK

This is not a set of prescriptive exercises for teachers of art. It is a resource offering words and pictures to stimulate discussion and suggest ideas for work. It does not aim to follow in the style of conventional teaching packs in supplying a model of good practice in either art or education. Instead, it hopes to question the whole notion of what constitutes 'good' practice and to question any kind of preferred curriculum (even a new one). To simply replace one model with another does not question the model itself, which is what this aims to do.

This resource is an attempt to address some key issues that relate to both the institutions of art and education, to challenge and question relations of power, hierarchies, and received information. Within the discourse of art, there are too many examples that reflect a narrow definition of culture, so that the perceived 'masters' are too often European, white, male and dead. The concept of an artist, or artists, must of course be expanded beyond this stereotypical 'norm' complete with beret, paintbrush and easel. Contemporary artists, for instance, reflect the diversity of the culture they work within. The token addition of 'equal opportunities' in the curriculum (such as the additions of "Mary Cassatt" and "African tribal art" (1)) does little to threaten the orthodoxy of the curriculum itself. This sense of the 'norm' (as problematic) has been the starting point for this project, as can be seen from the selection of referenced artwork. The choice is a narrow one, both in terms of historical and geographical scope, as well as the focus on painting in particular. It's not what you use but how you use it.

Part 1, "On Teaching Impressionism", refers directly to this issue, taking a constructively cynical stance to a favourite point of reference in the classroom. Part 2, "This is the National Curriculum for Art", examines the postcard and

book-work arising out of a number of complex issues that relate to contemporary art practice and its placing in a range of contexts, including the gallery, the school and the National Curriculum for Art. In this way, the project is designed to challenge a canon (2) of visual culture, particularly within the Primary school curriculum, by making connections between Art and Education and in establishing children themselves as artists, if they so wish. Part 3, "On Art and/or Education" places key questions, images, texts and discussions connecting children's own 'making' and that of other artists. Transcripts are taken straight from class discussions, and hope to question the purposes to which artistic production is made and formed through understanding 'art' as we learn it, make it and know it. Part 4, "This is not", takes the tactical role of negation to resist a sense of preferred meaning, leading to part 5, "Questioning children: What is a Question?" that examines the method of inquiry underpinning the entire project. The stimulus of simple questions tries to disentangle the representation of art as a means to examine a complex system resisting the idea that meaning or value somehow resides in the work of art itself. The questions become a starting point to examine the broader institutional framework of art and suggests an approach which might be usefully extended to include the educational processes involved in its application.

It is a resource to use, not follow. It tries not to cast itself in the role of the teacher/ author/expert who expects the child/ reader/learner to absorb the information and to be tested on it, as the majority of publications for teachers or children imply. As a result the style may appear a little obscure. Nevertheless, it is intended as a book that adults and children can read, given that the issue is HOW they read. Careful attention has been taken to present ideas in visual as well as written literacies, in order that their separation

may be undermined, and to balance child and adult contributions (3).
It is hoped that the contents are of use, in any way that may seem appropriate to the reader but like any kind of instruction that aims to be persuasive, please remain sceptical of it (4).

notes:
(1) "Art in the National Curriculum", Key Stage One, Attainment Target 2, DES, April 1992.
(2) 'Canon' as a preferred selection of art and artists that reproduces the values of the nation.
(3) The contributors were 31 children aged 6-7 years old and their classteacher with two much older project workers.
(4) A sentiment borrowed from John Berger, in, "Ways of Seeing", BBC 1972.

opposite: Renoir's "Umbrellas".

1:
ON TEACHING IMPRESSIONISM

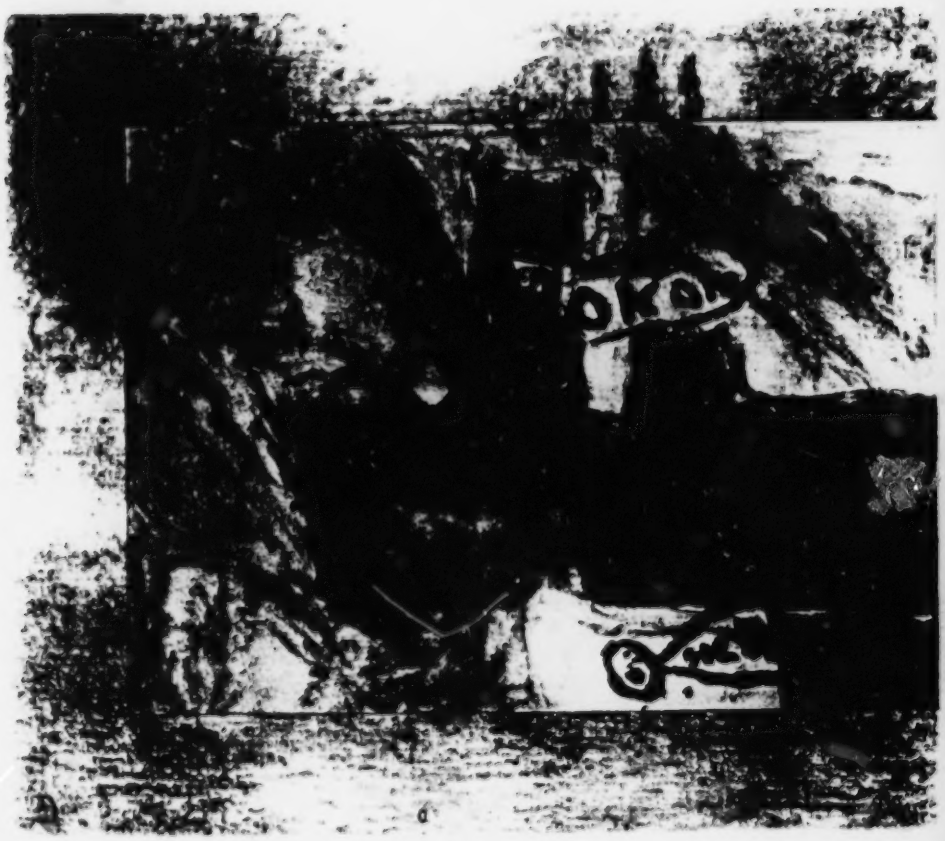
The word impressionism was originally intended as a criticism (nothing more than an impression) as the establishment of that time approved of more technically precise work. Impressionist work was ridiculed and feared as potentially revolutionary, which emphasises the inversion that appears to have taken place to the present day. "The triumph of consumerism and tourism" (1), "it's principal subject-matter is the playgrounds of the bourgeoisie- the shops, the boulevards, the theatres, the music-halls, the brothels, the villages and landscapes at the end of the new railway lines. It is an art form dedicated to leisure... as such, it is perfectly in tune with societies in which the 'haves' have increasing amounts of spare time to fill. It is an art of light and sun.

Museums and galleries take no risk with impressionist exhibitions, presuming the public don't know much about art, but making sure they know they should like Impressionist art. There are prints, postcards, scarves, T-shirts, biscuit tins, chocolate boxes, teaching packs and hundreds of books, films and videos on Van Gogh alone. "Impressionism's been seen as a safe box office success," states Nicholas Serota, Director of the Tate Gallery, London. Thus the activities of the museums feed the art market and the art market feeds the museums. Impressionist paintings carry huge market value. In 1910 Renoir's "Umbrellas" was bought for £1000, despite its lack of sunny disposition, and by 1958 the National Gallery insured it for £1/4 million.
Isolde's sunnier version, after Renoir (postcard 2A), will not be bought in the original, will not hang in any gallery. "The government only let grown-ups get famous", as the children put it, or "Kunst = Kapital" (Art=Capital), as Joseph Beuys put it. Art has always had this commodity value. Hans Haacke's exhibition, "Art remains Art" showed Manet's "Bunch of asparagus" of 1880, from the Wallraf-Richartz - Museum collection, on a studio easel in an approximately

6x8 metre room of PROJEKT '74 (2). Panels on the gallery walls presented the social and economic position of the persons who have owned the painting over the years and the prices paid for it. A perfect cross-curricular opportunity;- the integration and interaction of Maths, History, Geography, Modern Languages, Art and Media, Moral education. During the course of the project, the children's response to changing (not just copying) Impressionist works suggests their alternatives are somewhat critical, such as Salam's image after Monet where the Prime Minister calls "O.K." from out of the Houses of Parliament, as a member of the public cries "Help!" drowning in the Thames below. Impressionism appears to be characterised by 'nots';- "not ordered and not intellectual" (3) concerned with the appearance of things. It is Eurocentric, appropriating African and Japanese art forms without having any actually black people featuring. Might Sefakor's piece after Rousseau be seen as a reproach to this predictability of much establishment (white, male) art?

Perhaps Impressionism is merely a pre-video games view of childhood that prefers the child 'En plein air ' rather than indoors, or outer space. Those small landscapes painted out of doors picture a lyrical view of nature with very few signs of the industrial revolution, rather like preferred images of childhood itself. Impressionist work is light (some might say superficial), it's easy (to like and understand), delicate and affectionate (even feminine). It speaks of a carefree existence, such as we think our children ought to have. It is privileged.
Does Childhood in fact belong to the bourgeoisie? (4). Childhood itself follows a pattern of invention, and distorted representation, from the stylised mini-adults of the first Madonna and Child portraits to the idealised bonding of Cassatt's mothercare Portraits. Selected images of child-

overleaf: images by Salam, after Monet.



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hood offer easy consumption in the classroom as the training ground of conservative and uncritical art appreciation. Van Gogh is reputed to have said: "I call myself an impressionist because it doesn't commit you to anything." (5) Art with the politics taken out. Is this the key to Impressionism's suitability for children?
Does not value need to be examined as an economic as well as cultural interest?
Norman Rosenthal, exhibition secretary of the Royal Academy, echoes the precedent long set for canonical lists of Great Artists typical of art teaching packs for school consumption, with the sweepingly confident statement: "Great Impressionism is among the greatest art ever made. Of perhaps twenty great artists of the C19th eight are impressionists".
Perhaps as a response to this establishment recommendation, almost half the laminated glossy prints available as teaching aids in the Oliver & Boyd Primary pack are examples from late C19th painting. Who made the assumption that children aged 5 to11 relate primarily to this period? The implication may be that a n outdated view of childhood aims to perpetuate myths of the naive, primitive, impressionistic child (6).

Surely Impressionism could not be less appropriate for children, given the need to stand back from intentionally blurred Impressionist work and appreciate from a grown-up distance just to get it in focus. Children have a passion for detail, getting as close as possible. "DO NOT TOUCH", the guards at the gallery shouted as their dirty fingers and noses rubbed the exhibits, searching for art's secrets.
It seems that children also abhor sketchiness and carelessness, admiring realism for its technical skill or 'good' (photographic) painting ('wow, that looks real', etc.). Surrealism is often considered a 'good laugh' encouraged, no doubt, by

children's fiction produced by adults (7). How much is conditioned, rather than 'naturally' child-like? It would seem just as childhood is constructed, so is artistic taste.

A further irony is that much of the educational emphasis in art focuses on the very skills the impressionists rejected, such as: narrative subject-matter ('do a drawing to go with your story'); balanced compositions ('fill up the paper right to the edges'); correct drawing technique ('does that look like a teacher? rub it out, do it again with a sharp pencil and don't be silly').

Colour mixing, is however, seen as 'real' primary school activity, and both children and Impressionists share great experiments in jolly medleys of bright colour (literally Primary colours, especially if their budgets can afford it). Teaching Impressionism may make believe it's Summer in the classroom, but what of the miserable weather outside?

notes:

(1) James Hall, Critique of impressionism, in, The Guardian, Thurs July 14 1994.

(2) Hans Haacke, "Unfinished Business", MIT Press, 1986.

(3) Michel Levy, From Giotto to Cezanne, Thames & Hudson 1985.

(4) Peter Fuller, "Uncovering Childhood", p. 77, in, Martin Hoyles, ed., Changing Childhood, Writers and Readers Coop 1979.

(5) The Guardian, Thurs July 14 1994.

(6) For example: Rousseau, Lowry, Renoir.

(7) Such as Anthony Browne's picture books: "A Walk in the Park",1977, after the Surrealists' visual jokes (park benches wearing shoes, a man taking a tomato for a walk, etc.); "Through the Magic Mirror",1976, after the work of Magritte; "The visitors Who Came to Stay",1984, after Manet.

My painting is by Rousseau and shows a woman in the forest. I put clothes on her because she was naked, I also put her in bed and I made her a black woman
(Sefakor)

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2:
THIS IS THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

This is the National Curriculum for Art
Have you seen it before?
No
Have you heard of it before?
I might have heard it... but I can't remember...
Who do you think it's written for?
For policemen ? Maybe for big school
Do you think it's for children or grown-ups?
It's a book...for grown-ups
There's a lot of writing the reading, the writing is joined up and all small
It might be for teachers

The existing National Curriculum for Art contains worryingly narrow definitions of art and artists, and a rather prescriptive range of art historical knowledge (1). The anxiety many art and education practitioners have of the effect of such legislation is that teachers without personal confidence in the field will interpret lists of major artists, for instance, as an art canon (2), and restrict children's experience accordingly. The national curriculum appears to reinforce the idea that schools are convenient stockrooms of authentic national culture. Yet it is crucial that children develop critical awareness of a wide variety of artistic work around them, reflecting the diversity of medium and cultural expression available. Just as everything around an image is part of the process in determining its meaning, it is crucial that art is not seen in isolation but as part of a wider culture and as part of a broader curriculum. A broader curriculum that is, in the sense that subjects develop more and more in isolation (as the child moves through school becoming more and more specialised at Secondary school), higher levels of the curriculum clearly try to deny this inter-connectedness.

The practices and terms of art tend to be categories of

exclusion rather than inclusion. The official existence of the arts in institutions legislates against other broader definitions of artistic practice, aiming at all costs to maintain privilege. If some things can be named as art then the rest must be non-art. If art is in the gallery then it must not be anywhere else. It must be special and extraordinary, not of the everyday and ordinary. This can also be said of a concept ofeducation which determines that learning must take place in school not on the streets, in the classroom not at home. (Perhaps even worse via the television set, computer or video as the ultimate threat to current teaching apparatus and high art practice). Many contemporary writers claim that it is no longer viable to define and order some things as 'high' or 'avant-garde' art and culture over 'low' or 'popular' culture. It is certainly true that aesthetic decisions are made in the most mundane of circumstances. What make training shoes do you have on? (3). "What determines the significance of a work of art?" (4). The function of the gallery is to name and order the things housed there as "this is art". Queuing up outside the artwork itself are silent agendas such as: "This is an artist", "this is a critic", "this is a viewer", "this has value", "this has meaning", "this is real" or even "this is a copy", all within "this is a frame", forming the institution of art as a whole. It is art because of the conditions in which it is placed, the classic example of which is Duchamp's readymade urinal named "The Fountain", and signed R. Mutt,1917. So when a child asks "does that mean that everything is art?"; the toilet may offer an answer. Perhaps this is the fear, that art has nothing to say at all in its own right. But what does the national curriculum dare to say on such things?

It is important to undermine the hierarchy involved in privileging 'the real' over the 'less-real' as a necessary deception. Is it possible to separate the 'real' from the

'copy'? (5). Children appear to enjoy this debate in particular. Yet why is there no controversy over the authenticity of the art national curriculum? Instead there seems to be a fundamental belief that art cannot be taught; that the gifted child is born with artistic gifts that blossom into genius, with a little help along the way. Surely, education is fundamentally at odds with such a concept of readymade genius. Indeed, if you can paint, thank a teacher! Nevertheless, despite such a conflict of interests, education seems to practise the reverse. The discipline of art invites a greater number of expensive resource packs than many other subjects. It is also an expensive subject to teach, and as it is not a core subject, it is the first to be watered down (and become wishy-washy) in terms of a narrow choice of materials, scale and ambition. Other curriculum demands have legislated against and marginalised a more explorative approach to materials, leaving little more to work with than old powder paint and sugar paper. It is regarded as merely a fringe subject with no direct link to the job market, sensible future career or life skills. Even its link to (useful) knowledge is considered dubious. Art in the primary school is seen as nothing better than rehabilitation from the criminal pressures of core subjects (6).

Art in the Primary school is equated with play at best and display at worst. At least play-orientated art (eg. finger painting, plasticine and other physical arts) has the possible merit of learning by free discovery, as incidental stress therapy. Play is clearly for children, but who is Display for? Display (invariably , ironically mounted too high for the child to see) appears almost entirely competitive between rival classrooms (and teachers), it is evidence of channelling children into the order of things, their efforts trimmed, labelled, made symmetrical and neat. "Good display" is held as evidence of the child's entry into a higher cultural sphere.

No wonder the questions frequently raging in the teacher's unconscious are: 'will it be good for display?' (where is my exhibition space?) 'will I look like a better curator than the teacher next door?' 'will the Headteacher (as critic) write me a good review?' 'will the parents (as public) keep sending their children and give my classroom good audience figures to secure financial support?'
These preoccupations are far more off-putting, (perhaps more cynical) and far more likely to distract teachers of art from questioning the real issues:
'Do I need this teaching pack?' or "HOW MUCH IS THE FRAME?" (7).

Recommendations:
Teachers educating children.
Teachers could do more art themselves.
Teachers could take children to more museums.
Look at all the best artistic things there..
Display could have portraits of the children, teachers, ancient queens not just rich people but also servants and people who do special things.
This would give children a sense of what art is, what old art was and what new art might be.
(Fionnuala)

notes:

(1) The postcards are themselves derived from key images that have an particular currency in relation to Art, and exist in postcard form themselves on the racks of major galleries and museums (suggestions in the Art Curriculum document itself include: 'Leonardo da Vinci, Mary Cassatt, African tribal art, Rousseau, William Morris and Vincent Van Gogh'; note the token gesture towards equal opportunities and the suggestion of a generic African type).

(2) The word 'Canon' carries religious connotations in line with the moral tone of the National Curriculum.

(3) This is what Paul Willis would refer to as 'symbolic creativity', in, "Common Culture", Open University Press 1990.

(4) Douglas Crimp, "On The Museum's Ruins", MIT Press,1993.

(5) For instance, the American artist Sherrie Levine simply re-photographs to appropriate existing works of art as her artistic practice, eg. Untitled (after Alexander Rodchenko:3) 1987.

(6) It is interesting to note that rehabilitation is an activity associated with prisons, mental hospitals and schools (for further reading, see Michel Foucault's "Discipline and Punish", Penguin, 1977).

(7) Jaroslaw Kozlowski, "The Academy"; a series of questions ending with the above as a final comment on the context of art outside the work itself, published in conjunction with Matt's Gallery exhibition, Feb 1986, p.6.

opposite: The National Gallery.

3:
ON ART AND/OR EDUCATION

This section relates more explicitly to the nine postcards and can be seen as sample ideas for discussion and other work in the classroom. The postcards themselves are grouped in threes, in terms of source material (copies of the original paintings), copies and changes by children (again painted) and finally documentation of children entering the space of the picture, becoming an active part of it (by using a slide projector).

Key to postcards:

1:

The original paintings by Renoir (1A), Rousseau (1B), and Van Gogh (1C) with addition of blank space for copyright reasons (and the right to copy).

2:

The children's versions of these paintings with changes, in their words:

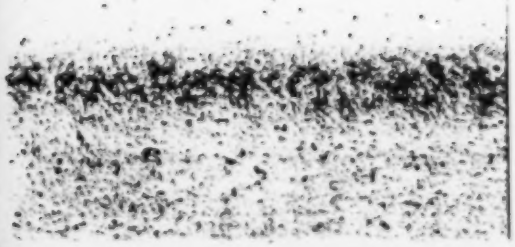
"This painting is by Renoir. I changed the weather. I made it sunny and took away the umbrellas", Isolde (2A).

"This painting is by Rousseau. I changed it by putting the factory in the man's hand look like a dangerous toy and the cigarette much bigger in the background, showing danger to the world", Roisin (2B).

"This painting is by Van Gogh. I put faces in the middle of the flowers because it looks funny", Jodie (2C).

3:

Projections of the children's paintings onto groups of children, also photographed by children. Isolde, Sefakor, Tom, Poria, Ben, after Renoir (3A). Roisin, Hugo, Craig, after Rousseau (3B). Jodie, Sephain, Lisa, Felix, Richard, after Van Gogh (3C).



opposite: image after Sophie Calle.
overleaf: images after Gilbert & George, Barbara Kruger and Van Gogh's "Sunflowers".

and/or
A:
What is it? (1A,2A.3A)
B:
Whose is it? (1B.2B.3B)
C:
Where is it? (1C)
What is it for? (2C.3C)

The postcards are for having, for posting if you like, and for discussing. If you use other postcards as a teaching resource then these postcards may expand the diversity of representation, and choice available. Posting an image is an act of communication, just as all art is a means of communication. The postcards raise issues for debate (3x3), using negation and assertion (this is... this is not...) Which is true? Neither? Using these cards is acknowledging children's own work. There are no fixed meanings and the possibilities for discussion are endless...

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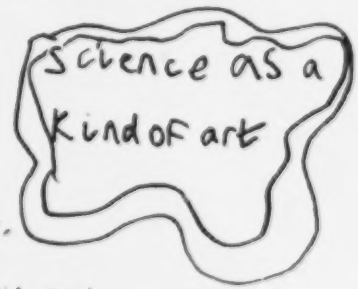
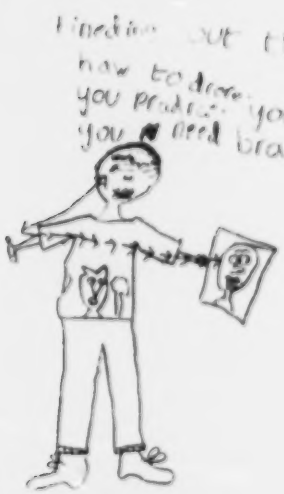
What is it?

What is Art?

using anything to draw
books, cooking, sculpting
flicking colours on
folding, making pop-ups,
posters, mobiles, postcards,
sketching
copying
imagining
using material, sewing, using cloth
building with wood, junk, anything, clay, modelling
making something wonderful that people might like
it is pictures
it is sculptures
almost everything
all of the things you want to do even hairdressers
art is paint and drawings and felt-tips and crayons
spreading colours around
singing

(1)





YOU need quite good brain. to do art if you like making thing you're probably good at art.

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Whose is it?

What is an artist?
Someone who draws carefully
Someone who does very good work
Well I think it's a tricky question
An artist does paintings and drawings and sometimes does sculpture
They do paintings and stuff and then sell them to people or art galleries or to boot fairs
They do paintings and drawings and make it look very real, draw it really carefully like of a man
An artist is a man
Do you think an artist has to be a man?
No no man or woman, you're a artist, you're a woman
Shall I tell you what an artist needs?
O.K. Tell me
You need to do drawings with artists' things, with things for coloring, with felt tips and glue and chalk and crayons and pastel and paint You need paper. No, not paper, canvas.
An artist might do pictures for books like ours
Yes, that's different, making books as well.
You have to use pencil before anything else
It has to be with pencil, and then you can do shading.
And with pencil, it can look more real
O.K. I'm going to ask you another question now. What do you think an artist looks like?
They look like people. They've got white coats on with buttons and they take pads out for on holiday
They've got those hats, benes, be...
Do you mean berets?
Yes and I've got one
They wear aprons and they're in a very dirty room and they've got mess-paint all over them
They look like any old thing they wear any old thing

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They might have T-shirts on or any clothes but they have themself on the wall
They have pictures of themselves on the wall?
Yes
That's interesting
Once I went to see my Nannie and we went to the canal there was a man he was painting a picture of the sea and the trees and he was wearing this kind of like white coat and it was really long
Yes you've got to grow into it from a little child
Right that brings me to my next question. Can children be artists?
No (&)Yes
O.K. some people think no, some people think yes. (general noise of disagreement) Wait a minute. Can you tell me why you think "no"
um, because they're so littler than men they can't lift the... they might not let the children...the children can't really paint so good as grown-ups
I think the children can't draw so good, they have to do it for years and years
Why? why can't they? they can that's not true
O.K. Hang on Someone doesn't agree. What did you s-?
I said they can I'm an artist now and I've sold ten paintings and I'm a child
And who did you sell your paintings to?
They're all the same person actually, she's the only one that would buy them
- No, she sells them to herself
It is not, to my friend
Right what about you?
I think children can maybe they can maybe they couldn't do a proper picture but they can do good scribbles and stuff also they even if its not good even it might be good Like a baby can do a scribble and it might go in a

museum
Yeah I've seen a whole load of scribbles in a museum
children can grown-ups can adults can anyone can really
art isn't just for adults it can be for babies or anyone
Anyway we can all be artists

Who is Art for? who looks at art, sees art?
Everyone, Anyone,
No-one
The Government, Prime Ministers, things like that
The Queen
Grown -ups
and children
People
You don't have to look at it if you don't want to
art is for everyone
for women and men
for the artist
children
everyone in the universe
for people who live on the street
... Yeah but some art is special art
Who can look at this "special art"?
Artists
The Prime Minister
The Queen, Prince, Princess, King
A very important man
Very important man or woman
A robber!
Human beings
Are there some people who cannot see art?
Aliens
Blind people
people who are too poor to get the bus to the place, the art gallery

no, they have their own art at home
Animals some animals are colour blind
Babies
If you were blind, how would you experience art?
Feel it
Imagine it
You could remember it in your head if you'd seen it before
animals could look at art
some animals are colour-blind
You could hear music, you don't have to always look at art

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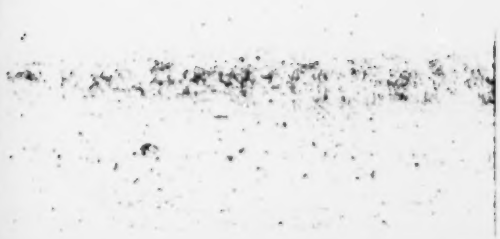
Where is it?

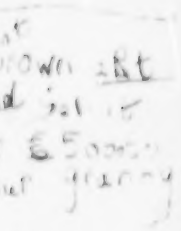


Where might you see art?
Glass boards
Shops
Museums
Art Galleries
On the floor
In people's houses
Inside books
Inside factories, places where grown-ups work, where the boss is
In Parks
On the walls
All over the world...
in art galleries
When we went to the Tate gallery, what kinds of art did you see?
painting, watercolours, a ship made of gold, models, stuck on *shapes, statues, collages, paintings, sketches, electricity, carvings*
What did you notice about the people?
famous people, people who are already dead, gods, bald people, people who are made up, rich people, English people, people from the England/France war, extinct people, naked people
What kind of people were not there?
people who live in streets, poor people, children (they did!), painters, ordinary people, no-one in our class, Ian Wright (do you mean footballers or people with black skin?)
footballers, black people, no people having love, no lovely people, no black people - they're being sexist!
do you mean that? what does it mean?
It means love. If I am, a boy's playing with a Barbie and a boy says that's a girl's game - that's sexist
If a girl plays with a car and the same happens.

It means that people think that girls or boys can't do some things
What about the word racist?
It's like saying rude things about black people and not white people. being really nasty and making them into slaves
Do you know anything about the Tate gallery, where did it get its money?
John Major, selling pictures, Black people
Yes, from profits of sugar (Tate and Lyle) built on money from the slave trade. Tate made lots of money and built the gallery.
Do you think it's fair that there are no Black people in the Tate gallery?
No, it's sexist, no, racist.
I saw one a Black person in a war painting, there's another with black people in too.
then it would be all black people and no white people.
no, a mixture
What about the slides we showed before, do you remember any pictures by Black artists?
yes (description of picture)
do you remember her name?
Sonia Boyce. what about the title?
I'm not holding them up, I'm holding on (actual title "She ain't Holding Them Up, She's Holding On (Some English Rose)" 1986).
she's a woman artist
There were others by children, disabled people and people from all over the world
Perhaps galleries have a lot to learn
There are no African people, Indian people, Portuguese people (actually there was Paula Rego), *poor people, in the Tate...*
(2)

What is it for?

What is art for?
to put in museums
to catch your imagination
to look at
so you can have fun
you can whack it around and mess with it
why have art?
because it's fun
because it's education. it teaches you it's good to do things
the world wouldn't look that nice without it
because people enjoy doing it
it makes you strong
people like putting it up in museums



(explanation of postcard project, including its distribution and cost)
Do we get the money?
for children it (a single postcard)*should be half price like 10p*
they should be about 25p for grown-ups
what if the parents threaten their children to get them at the cheap price?
we'll only sell them to honest people
children and people who live on the streets, people with no jobs, people who live in a poor country, or if you've been robbed, old people who didn't have lots of money before, disabled people
if you have a house, then you must pay the proper amount and if you're rich or a pirate
in our playtime, we should be allowed to sell our post-cards on a school stall, in hospitals, surgeries and in art galleries
Why do art in this way?
if someone else has done it you're not really interested

overleaf: collage by Salam, after Van Gogh's "Sunflowers".

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it makes you feel good and it makes you have a good feeling about yourself
you'll get to learn art and do it and then you'll have quite a bit of time to spend on it
ask John Major if our art is good enough to show to the public
there's only one child that can do art children don't get seen much because they don't frame it and it might not be fair the government don't let them
children's work should be seen in the art galleries especially stuff about not killing the rain forest
adults might say that's good for an 8 year old or a 2 year old
and they're still not famous which isn't fair
you haven't got enough talent
even scribbles like a 2 year old do they're good and my brother says it's to do with how your hands move if they're wobbly or stiff
if your hands wobbly you're better at abstract and if they're stiff they might do good realistic paintings
if you're good at seeing maybe you'll get more in your sight to copy from
maybe there isn't a way to help with seeing some people's eyes are a bit funny although you can wear glasses
in some art you get the idea but it won't be as neat
well sometimes you can have messy things they come out in your brain it might be a good idea better than copying

Taking pictures all the time, sometimes photography is like real life and it helps children to see the world. Get children plane tickets and take pictures out of airoplanes (I'm trying to be exotic)
taking photos of things will make children proud to make

things that might be a postcard
the world can see it like you become famous if you made a postcard but in true life you're not
an artist that isn't famous will only be on TV once. the government don't let them because they're too young but it doesn't if you're young it's if you're good at it
if they saw an art that was by a child they'd just say that's rubbish and make you feel like you're not wanted in the world
nobody knows you you're not some kind of nobody person
they just don't treat you like you're real
they're leaving us out
they don't think of us
they won't let you in this because you'll just do a scribble but that might be a really good abstract, lines and spirals may seem messy but that's abstract
yeah and they think they'll be shown up
the government only let grown-ups get famous
they're kind of showing off that we're tiny and they're not you don't have the skill to do it
they might just look for one second and then say no you can't do it when you haven't really studied the picture enough
they just look at us at the way we're so small
yeah they make the artwork feel small
if children got the money they would leave the adults out we would spend it wisely get something you really need or want we wouldn't leave anyone out
children are sometimes like grown-ups like Fionnuala and Lisa but they're still fair and they play
you're childish
Thanks for the compliment.

overleaf: collage by Sefakor, after Lowry,
"I made my picture like a stage with curtains on it. The people falling down are like the actors and the people at the bottom are watching "

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notes:
(1) The children involved in this project scripted and performed a class assembly called "This is not an Assembly, this is a Children's Art Lecture", as a finale. Aping the style of grown-up slide talk, it presented key words and pictures developed out of the project (approx.15 half-day sessions with Geoff and Vick, plus further work with Paula, classteacher). All speech and technology was controlled and managed by the six and seven year old children. The lecture was recorded on video.
(2) Early in the project, the class visited the Tate Gallery, London. The gallery was visited beforehand and to find postcards available of artworks currently on show in the galleries. The teacher assessed which children would work best with which images, and each child was given a copy of the postcard in an envelope. Following discussion about their image with the teacher in the class, notesof ideas covered the envelope containing the image. Meeting at the gallery, the children were given a grown-up (parent!), and a map, and set the task of finding their image by a given time. Having found them, the class moved around the gallery together, giving and receiving brief seminars as art critics in front of their artworks, recorded on video. A small microphone was clipped to their tops, and they referred to their notes as well as directly in response to the piece. They were the youngest children there, and yet the most engaged in grappling with artistic diversity, later extending their criticism to the collection as a whole. The active nature of this engagement with the gallery was striking as the model around us seemed to be largely passive: sitting classes of schoolchildren listening to a gallery 'education' lecture on individual paintings, mostly with a strong narrative content.

opposite: Magritte, "Ceci n'est pas une pipe", 1917.

4:
THIS IS NOT

Words have tended to be embodied in the form of things they represent. When confronted with a painting of a pipe, we might say "it's a pipe" when it is clearly not. However, this response that identifies the word with the 'real' thing can be simply thrown into doubt by the addition of another word, making the phrase "it is not a pipe"; as Magritte literally proposes: "This is not a pipe" (1).

The image is simple, like one found in a school text book; a thing and the words that name it, words and things (2). Evidently, words do not refer to things themselves, and within a system of words and things, there is an arbitrary relationship between a word and the thing represented. Clearly this is not a pipe but an image of a pipe and an image of words. Michel Foucault would have it that "... the reference 'anchor' is gone. Things are cast adrift, more or less like one another, without any of them being able to claim the privileged status of a 'model' for the rest" (3). Maybe there is no pipe, only the system within which we imagine there to be one. Might objects function as words?

Such ambiguity allows for misunderstandings, limitless readings and interpretations; that "the very thing that is seen and read is hushed in the vision, hidden in the reading" (4). Who are the readers of this text? How are they encouraged to make sense of these words and things? The text you are reading now relies on a set of educational conventions with the writer taking on a dominant position on the hard page, in a crude display and role-play of authority that aims to legitimise what is said.

"But why have we introduced the teacher's voice? Because scarcely has he stated, 'This is a pipe,' before he must correct himself and stutter, 'This is not a pipe, but a drawing of a pipe,' 'This is not a pipe but a sentence saying that this

is not a pipe,' 'The sentence "this is not a pipe" is not a pipe,' 'In the sentence "this is not a pipe, this is not a pipe: the painting, written sentence, drawing of a pipe - all this is not a pipe.'" (5).

Western art forms are promoted (for and by teachers) over non-Western, men's art over women's, adult's over children's, and so on. Like Magritte's painting, everything is "solidly anchored within a pedagogic space" as "in vain the text unfurls below the drawing with all the fidelity of a label in a scholarly book" (6) or title in a gallery of art.

It is with this in mind that Marcel Broodthaers used the negative in the tradition of Magritte, titling his work of art as "this is not a work of art". Recognising the conditions under which art operates, Broodthaers created his own museum in his own home/studio, 'The Musee d'Art Moderne', not so much for his art but as his art. Despite the warning "no people allowed", and later "no children allowed", guests were invited to view empty picture crates together with "overvalued" postcards by nineteenth century French 'masters'. After a systematic mythology charting the development from child prodigy to adult artistic genius, it is proposed that "the artist invents nothing, that he or she only uses, manipulates, displaces, reformulates, repositions what history has provided" (7).

To simply say "This is not a work of Art" may strike a note of irony in a publication based on the teaching of art.
Still, it might not.

notes:

(1) Rene Magritte, "Ceci n'est pas une pipe",1926.

(2) after Michel Foucault, taken from the title, "Les Mots et Les Choses", known in English as "The Order of Things", Tavistock 1970.

(3) James Harkness, "Translator's Introduction", in, Michel Foucault, "This is not a pipe", University of California Press 1983, p.10.

(4) Michel Foucault, ibid, p.25.

(5) Michel Foucault, ibid, p.30.

(6) Michel Foucault, ibid, p.29.

(7) Douglas Crimp, ibid, p.71.

... I love art so I do it willingly
(Fionnuala)

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5:
QUESTIONING CHILDREN:
WHAT IS A QUESTION?

What is a question?

The word comes from the Latin 'quaerere': 'to seek', but for what, exactly? When a teacher asks a pupil a question, the pupil seeks the answer most likely to please, least likely to exasperate. What, then are teachers seeking? Conforming children? If it's true that teachers ask children about a thousand questions a week, children will ask more, especially if you encourage them, especially if you risk it.
Lately the only risk teachers seem to run is that of telling children the answers to the coming national curriculum tests long before the questions are even asked. Have teachers really finished questioning the national curriculum? Do they allow "their" pupils to? To be questioned is to feel challenged at best, threatened at worst, as to question is to be in a position of control. Questioning comes from those in power, and not often enough to them.

Perhaps it is seen as good economic sense to ensure minimal questioning or any challenges to 'back to basics' education from children to teachers, teachers to teachers, teachers to tutors, citizens to the state. This may be done by removing teacher-training from the Universities (as an academic subject open to debate: how do we teach teaching? we're still asking) and placing it directly in schools (a 'competency', simply to be practised, and made perfect, even incontestable). Students of teaching will be removed out of the context of a questioning (reflective/reflexive) environment and thrown in at the deep end, to sink or swim.

Children are more sophisticated in their responses than such low educational expectations, as is obvious by the complex psychological assessment they make of question -expectation. They also often outstrip adults in open-mindedness and emotional honesty. They understand sub-

tleties within hierarchies, such as relative gender/wage/education positions, and can subvert them, inverting the norm, playing with the facts and preferred answers, suggesting new questions. Risk philosophical playfulness through questioning as a model for a diverse curriculum, and you allow space for the pupil to go beyond any teaching offered, with such strength of conviction, it may seem almost a threat.

"Truly I advise you: Go away from me and guard yourselves against Zarathrustra!...
One repays a teacher badly if one remains only a pupil. And why, then, should you not pluck at my laurels?"
(Friedrich Nietzsche, "Thus Spoke Zarathrustra: A Book for Everyone and No-one").

Teachers mostly ask questions to satisfy their curiosity about "their" children's knowledge, but children know that curiosity can never be, should never be satisfied, or you have stopped learning.
The most common question types used by teachers can be listed as the following. Which types do you use? Here the author's own questioning weaknesses are exposed in a discussion following a class visit to the Tate Gallery, and a somewhat improved session questioning about questions (at a later date)
These question-types (1), are numbered to suggest a progressive, even developmental order.

1. Fact recall questions:
When we went to the Tate gallery, what kinds of art did you see?
painting, watercolours, a ship made of gold, models, stuck on shapes, statues, collages, paintings, sketches, electricity, carvings

2. Naming questions:
What is a sculptor?
It's someone who makes things out of stone, or brick, or rice
Stone or brick or rice?
No, ice
Oh, well it could be rice
Ha ha ha

3. Control questions:
Do you think you could sit still?

4. Pseudo-questions:
What about the word racist?
It's like saying rude things about black people and not white people being really nasty and making them into slaves
Do you know anything about the Tate gallery, where did it get its money?
John Major, selling pictures, Black people
Yes, from profits of sugar (Tate and Lyle) built on money from the slave trade. Tate made lots of money and built the gallery. Do you think it's fair that there are no Black people in the Tate gallery?
No, it's sexist, no, racist
I saw one a Black person in a war painting, there's another with black people in too
that's not much
then it would be all black people and no white people.
no, a mixture

5. Observation questions:
What did you notice about the people (in the artworks)?
famous people, people who are already dead, gods, bald people, people who are made up, rich people, English people, people from the England/ France war, extinct people, naked people

6. Problem-solving questions:
Suppose you got a bit lost (in the gallery)
what would you do about it?
go to that round place (Rotunda)*and wait for your grown-up*

tell, ask the people in uniforms
you could look at the map

7. Reasoning questions:
why have we used questions in this project?
so we're not stupid about art and we can do things about art
so we don't do opposite things to the things you are meant to do
asking questions helps not be stupid
because if someone knows and someone else asks that is to do with the thing they know, they know it
maybe so we can know what things are about

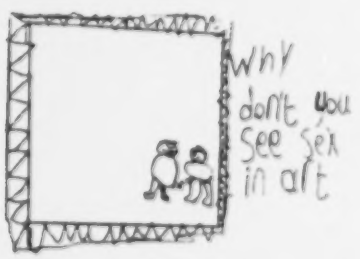
8. Speculative questions:
why do you think this?
sometimes they didn't find anything out and it's fake
they guess

9. Evaluative questions:
does it matter?
no
you have to know as well as it helping you might be greedy about things asking for too much about art cos maybe some ways it's like money, you might want to be really rich and have everyone as slaves

10. Sceptical questions:
but do schools tell the truth?
no, not all the time
sometimes

never
children, when they were little the teachers told them the truth
how do you know they are telling the truth?

Question types 1 to 5 are closed; that is, they require simple word responses, single "correct" answers predetermined by the questioner. Types 6. to 10. are more open, in that they require responses of a sentence or more, can accept a variety of suggestions, and there is no 'correct' answer. Much of this depends on the teacher, however, and how readily they can accept dialogue and dispute in the classroom.



notes:

(1) Adapted from Fig.4, p.16, in "Effective Questioning" A teaching skills workbook, edited by Trevor Kerry, MacMillan,1984, which, in it's own way, seems largely drawn from the work of Barnes. Barnes, it should be noted, has since questioned the doubtful objectivity of his categories given the subjective nature of language. (Barnes, Britton & Torbe, "Language, the Learner and the School", Heinemann, 1990). For a n excellent analysis of Barnes', (and your own questioning attempts) read "Questions and Schooling: Classroom Discourse across the Curriculum" by Sally Mitchell, The university of Hull Centre for Studies in Rhetoric: Occasional Paper No.1, 1992.

The demands of the National Curriculum have unfortunately laid emphasis on closed questioning, and this in turn has affected commercial teaching packs in terms of their style and scope. For example, the "Primary Art" pack produced by Oliver & Boyd,1992, offers 'discussion points' of paintings such as Matisse's "The Goldfish Bowl" in the following order:

"1. What is the centre of interest in this painting? (the answer is the goldfish in a tank) 2. Can you recognise any of (the plants) in the picture? (the ones on the lower right are geraniums)... 6. How many goldfish can you see? Is it four or eight?"

The more recent publication "Oxford Primary Art", from Oxford University Press,1994, lists a number of themed statements and questions about, for instance, Modern Art: "These sculptures are not very lifelike are they? Do you like them? (p.7)... These two paintings are by the same artist. They almost look like photographs don't they? Can you think how he might have made them? (p.19)"

If it seems pedantic to ask such closed questions, then what of supplying the (fixed) answers? What is the teaching of art reduced to? "Primary Art" seems concerned with addressing Mathematical and Botanical fact, and "Oxford Primary Art" with Realism. It would appear that the teaching of Art at Primary level has not moved with the times.

What are the Purposes of such (and any) questioning?
Does the class know?
Are the Language Levels appropriate for the entire class?
Are the Thinking Levels exacting, demanding, but also adaptable?
Have the class had access to all Information required to meet the questions? (Do they know what 'lifelike' means?)
Consider:
Repeating your own question (adapt it or bore your audi-

ence) Repeating pupil's answers (comment or extend them)
Answering your own questions (what on earth is the point?)
Questioning for choral answers (do we want automatons or pupils?)
Vocabulary (is it clear enough? go back steps? try a little prompting?)
Timing (are you and they relaxed, calm and patient? allowing thinking time? varying pace?)
Reinforcement (using yes's, nods, smiles, eye contact, pupil's names, praising considered answers? building up from half-answers? not rejecting the misguided? improving on answers? teasing ? offering further questions?)

Why do it?
Questioning shows you are interested in what children know, feel and think. Their questioning shows their faith in you, to the ultimate flattery of questioning the information you provide.
It shows you respect and value children's own ideas, self-expression and honesty. It shows you have the courage not to be all-knowing, bearing in mind children do not suffer from these pretensions.

It challenges the belief in preferred answers and refuses the notion that knowledge is fixed and imparted from the top down.
It stimulates children's interest and curiosity to learn.
It encourages thinking aloud, the ability to conceptualise, and critical analysis.
It improves group solidarity and acknowledges difference.
It can improve responsibility and consideration for others.
Last and probably least, it can monitor children's learning.
Or does it?
Given that the act of teaching itself is closed, it may be something of an impossibility to ask an open question to a class of children (without an ulterior educational motive) yet if any curriculum area had potential for openness, it must be art.
This teacher/author is still too dependent on questions that provoke orthodox reasoning, but any teacher worthy of the job description never stops questioning their own practice (this is the art of teaching). Questions are at best for developing understanding rather than checking on it, for exploring all the implications, encouraging mental agility, scepticism, humour, empathy, discourse. This questioning session shows the development the class and teacher made over the course of the project, beginning with checking up on them:

What were the questions?
about art, What is art? Why is it art? Where is art? Why do it? Who makes it? Who's it for? Where does it go? where does it come from? Who makes it? Where does it go? Why have it? Who invented art?
What's it worth? What does it say?
and then, handing over the power to reason, make decisions, and have the last say to the children, allowing for the possibility of the fallible teacher, the powerful child:

What is a Question?

It's something that has a question mark at the end
it's like someone is asking you a question, an animal or a person asking you a question
if there were no questions it would be like everyone would know everything
if you didn't ask questions you wouldn't know how to read or write
you need questions to learn in school
when you ask something
if we didn't ask questions... I've forgotten
a question... pretend there was a game, a man tells us a question, there's an answer or something
not only a man
are there always answers?
yes and no!
no, but if you ask them what's the biggest carving, they might know
are there some questions that people might not know?
nobody knows why the dinosaurs died out
it was a meteorite... on a programme, a man had found something that had a meteorite under the ground...
yes,but only he thinks that...
do you think all TV programmes are true?
No, but the news is always true
why do you think this?
sometimes they didn't find anything out and it's fake they guess
say the dinosaurs died cos there wasn't enough water and the weatherman isn't right

why have we used questions in this project?
so we're not stupid about art and we can do things about art

so we don't do opposite things to the things you are meant to do
asking questions helps not be stupid
because if someone knows and someone else asks that is to do with the thing they know, they know it
so we can know what things are about
have we told you?
you have to guess what it means and what it does
there's no answer
does it matter?
no
you have to know as well as it helping you might be greedy about things asking for too much about art cos maybe some ways it's like money, you might want to be really rich and have everyone as slaves
you are asking us a question
adults ask children questions
children ask adults
who more?
children
why?
because they are born before them and they know what for, so they can learn
grown-ups ask children their names
children don't know nothing
children go to school and adults don't, they go to work
they teach children so they have to go to school

but do schools tell the truth?
no, not all the time
sometimes
never
children, when they were little the teachers told them the truth
How do you know they are telling the truth?

overleaf: The Tate Gallery.

THIS IS THE END

THIS IS NOT

This is Not the National Curriculum for Art: a collaborative project with children on the discourses of art and education

Vick de Rijke & Geoff Cox

THIS IS FOR SALE £9 for book and postcard pack

THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM FOR ART

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What is it?
(after Renoir)
Postcard 1A *by children and Paula Greatrex from Rhodes Avenue Primary School, London N22 with Geoff Cox & Vick de Rijke*

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What is it?
(Isolde, after Renoir)
Postcard 2A *by children and Paula Greatrex from Rhodes Avenue Primary School, London N22 with Geoff Cox & Vick de Rijke*

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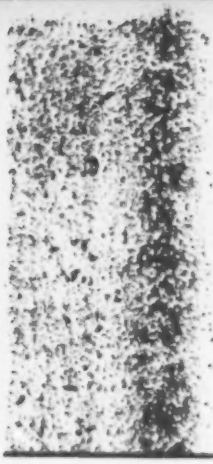

What is it?
(Isolde, Sefakor, Tom, Poria, Ben, after Renoir)
Postcard 3A *by children and Paula Greatrex from Rhodes Avenue Primary School, London N22 with Geoff Cox & Vick de Rijke*

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Whose is it?
(after Rousseau)
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Rhodes Avenue Primary School, London N22
with Geoff Cox & Vick de Rijke

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Whose is it?
(Roisin, after Rousseau)
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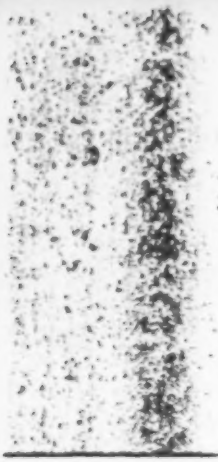

Whose is it?
(Roisin, Hugo, Craig, after Rousseau)
Postcard 3B *by children and Paula Greatrex from*
Rhodes Avenue Primary School, London N22
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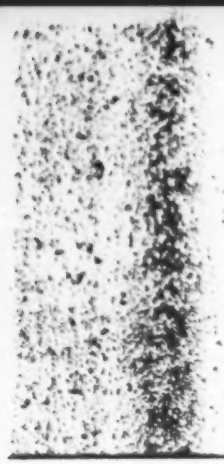

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Where is it?
(after Van Gogh)
Postcard 1C *by children and Paula Greatrex from*
Rhodes Avenue Primary School, London N22
with Geoff Cox & Vick de Rijke

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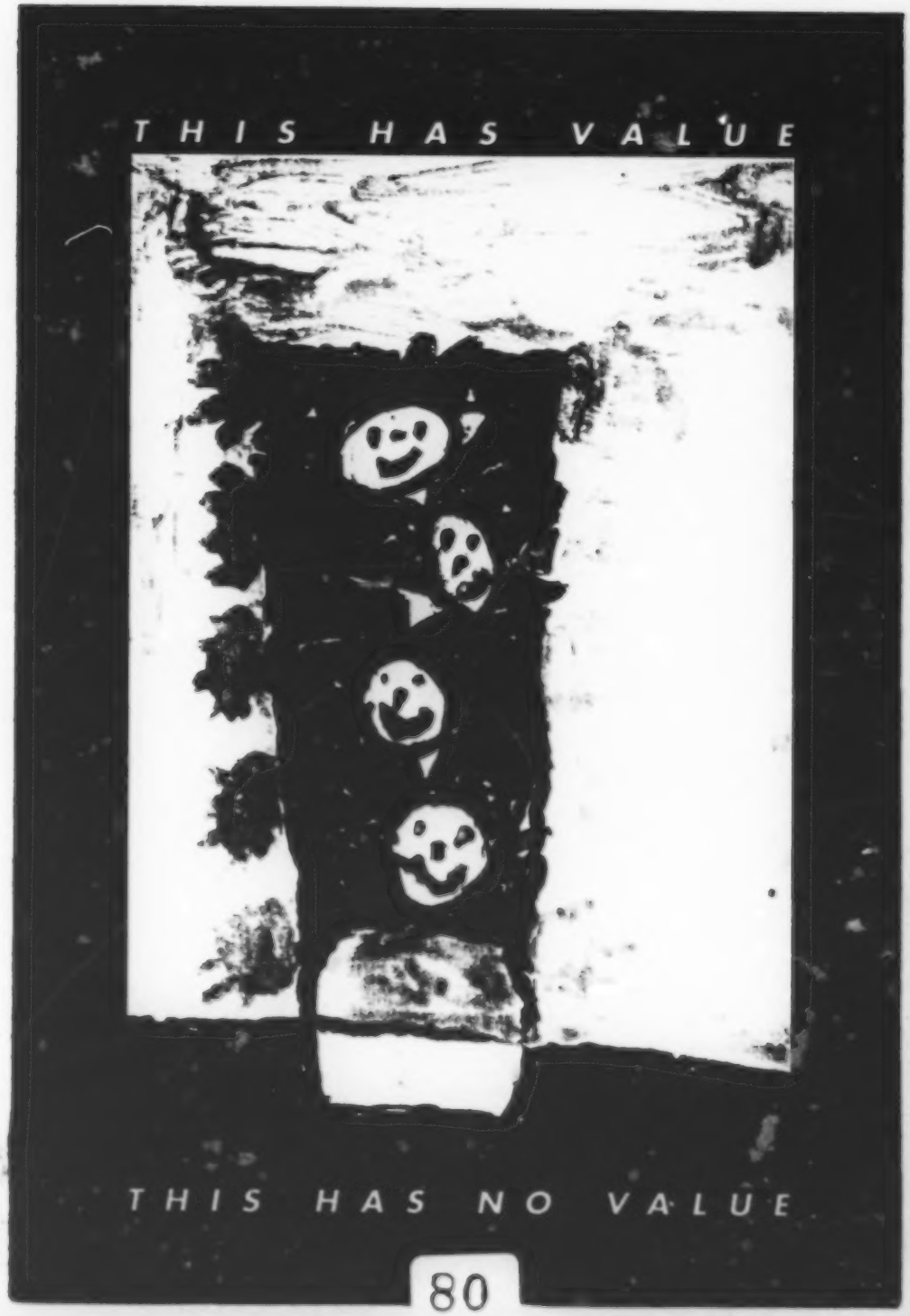
THIS HAS VALUE
THIS HAS NO VALUE

What is it for?
(Jodie, after Van Gogh)
Postcard 2C *by children and Paula Greatrex from Rhodes Avenue Primary School, London N22 with Geoff Cox & Vick de Rijke*

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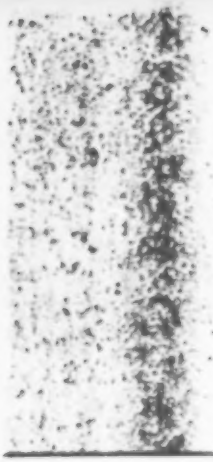
THIS HAS MEANING
THIS HAS NO MEANING



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What is it for?
(Jodie, Sephain, Lisa, Felix, Richard, after Van Gogh) Postcard 3C *by children*
and Paula Greatrex from Rhodes Avenue Primary School, London N22
with Geoff Cox & Vick de Rijke

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WHO?
You are invited

WHAT?
"THIS IS NOT THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM FOR ART"
A teaching pack which aims to question the discourses of art and education will be launched by Vick de Rijke, Geoff Cox, classteacher and 7 yr old children from Rhodes Avenue Primary school.
Children are welcome, and refreshments will be provided.

WHERE?
The Whistler Rooms, the Mansion, Trent Park campus, Middlesex University, Bramley Rd, Oakwood, N.14.

WHEN?
Friday 2nd December 1994, 4.30pm-6pm.

WHY?
Come and see, R.S.V.P. Mark Bobb 081 362 6349.
If you can't come but would like a pack, please ring the number above for details.

funded by Middlesex University, The Foundation for Sport and the Arts, The Paul Hamlyn Foundation

image overleaf: Sefakor, after Lowry. 85